

Consider the shining example of Cold War advocacy by the American Jewish community which championed the plight of Soviet Jewry with remarkable effect.

Could such passion be galvanized once again?

I'll close with the inspiring words of one of America's greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln.

Speaking to a nation torn apart by bloody civil war, he still saw the importance of giving thanks, and in 1863 set apart the last Thursday of November for such a celebration declaring:

"We are prone to forget the Source from which [the blessings of fruitful years and healthful skies] come. . . . No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God. . . ."

While each of us may hail from varied backgrounds and beliefs, we know as Americans that religious freedom is our birthright—a gracious gift of the Most High God not to be denied by any man or government.

As we gather today and later next week with family and friends let us pause for a moment and give thanks for our first freedom while not forgetting those for whom this gracious gift is denied.

HONORING JOHN D. SLATER, SR. FOR HIS COURAGEOUS SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II

HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding World War II service of Private John D. Slater, Sr.

Mr. Slater was born in 1919, just a year after the close of the First World War. He grew up in a country ravaged by the Great Depression and marked by segregation and Jim Crow. Mr. Slater lived in some of the deepest parts of the South, picking cotton as early as five years old.

When war broke out in Europe and reached our doorstep in the Pacific, Mr. Slater was drafted into the Army to serve and protect our country. He served in the 43rd Quartermaster Company and the 2nd Army.

Mr. Slater's company crossed the Rhine River on temporary bridges during heavy shelling, facing fierce opposition at every turn. By war's end, Mr. Slater had served in France, Belgium and Holland.

At one point, Mr. Slater was separated from his company behind enemy lines for three months before being found 1,000 miles from their destination point. In 1946, he was honorably discharged after four years in the Army.

Today, at 94 years old, Mr. Slater is one of only three remaining African Americans who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. During this, the last-gasp effort of the German army, the allied forces bent, but held and won the day—and the war. Mr. Slater was not only a witness to a defining moment in the world's history, he helped shape it.

After the war, Mr. Slater blazed his own trail, working for roughly 30 years with American Motors, starting in 1949, and opening Slater's Barbecue in Waukegan, Illinois, in the district I represent, in 1957. On weekends, for 40 years, he would cook his famous foot-longs and ribs, serving a gracious and eager community.

Mr. Slater has been a devoted husband and father and a pillar of the community for decades. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize John D. Slater, Sr. for his service to our country and his impact in the community.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. BLAIR MAHONEY

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Mr. GERLACH and Mr. PITTS to recognize Mr. Blair Mahoney for his distinguished leadership as Executive Director of the Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau (CVB), and to congratulate him on his retirement.

For the past five years, Mr. Mahoney has helped make Chester County a destination for visitors from across the Commonwealth and the nation. He instituted strong leadership, sound fiscal planning, a historic office renovation and relocation, and an award-winning branding campaign. Through these efforts, Mr. Mahoney helped communicate Chester County's cultural, natural, and historic treasures to many and draw new visitors and economic development to our region.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize Blair Mahoney for his excellent service to the Chester County community and wish him well in his retirement. He takes with him the gratitude and respect of his staff, Board of Directors, peers and the people of Chester County.

SHARING STORIES IN SUPPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

HON. JOE GARCIA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the following are stories of individuals affected by our nation's broken immigration system:

Story 1: I came to this country in 1980 with the desire that all immigrants have—to seek better opportunities. I worked very hard to make my way in this country. I had the opportunity to apply for residency, thanks to the amnesty by President Ronald Reagan and the laws of this country. I presented the evidence required by the immigration process and my request was approved, giving me the temporary residence and my social security number.

After two years, I had to change from temporary residence to permanent residence, so I just had to request the change of status at any immigration office. I even was able to travel to Ecuador, and Immigration stamped my passport. Then, because my process was done in New Jersey but I had moved to Miami for personal reasons, in 1990 I went to the Immigration office in Miami. Since then, I have been subjected to negligence by Immigration. Instead of giving me the permanent residence, they just put a sticker to validate my temporary residence for one year more. That happened again the following year, and the third consecutive year after that. Then, they didn't want to give me the residency, because they said that LULAC cases in

Miami had been fraudulent, to which I responded that actually my case had been in New Jersey. They said that I had to bring my case from New Jersey to Miami, which took three more years. After that, I started wondering what was wrong with my case. They always responded to me with endless excuses: a fire took place at an immigration office and a lot of information was damaged, paperwork became too backed up when they had to put all the information of all cases in a computer system, elections were taking place, I needed to complete and return another form and get fingerprinted. I completed and returned the form, then I was fingerprinted and had to wait more. I trusted the agents of this country and the laws, so I waited and waited. They asked me to fill out another form and so on and on. I sent three forms and fingerprints but nothing happened.

Then the attacks on September 11, 2001, happened, which made things worse. There was no news at all. An executive order by President George Bush was released, ordering that immigration documents should be given to people who got Reagan's reform. I presented it and nothing happened. I called two or three times every month asking about my case and nothing happened. I was told that the process took up to six months, but I already had spent two years waiting and nothing. In 2005, I found out about a brain tumor through my medical exams. I received surgery and after that I couldn't work so I lived in a critical economic situation. I lost everything I had. That same year, there was another executive order request to resolve immigration cases because of the many complaints from victims of the immigration service. I sent documentation by mail to the correct address and on time, and they rejected it three times. I found an honest lawyer that took the case (pro bono, because of my financial situation), and from there I had legal representation. We sent copies of the pages with the LULAC law, and we always got negative responses, so we filed appeals but received again negative responses. They asked me for proofs that were impossible to find after 23 years, but nevertheless I was able to find some. All of this just to make me lose the hope of solving my case.

In the last response not only did they deny my case, but also they took away my temporary residence. I demand my permanent residency and a path to citizenship without more delay, because I have tried for over 24 years with my residency, in the name of God, Jehovah, and the signed and executed laws of this country. Don't allow injustice to win in this country. You are politicians first for this country.

Story 2: Alex came here when he was very young. He's from Honduras. Honduras is a very poor country. His family is very poor, but he speaks fairly fluent English. He came here to get a better life. There's no work in Honduras and very high crime. He came here when he was probably 17 or 18 years old. He hitched rides on trains, travelling on boxcars with only the clothes he had and no money. So, he basically crossed three countries, I believe Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico. When he got to this country, of course he came here illegally, but he ended up in Virginia and he then went to Knoxville, Tennessee. During the time he was in Virginia and Tennessee, he was greatly exploited by people who had him working for them. He was all alone. He had no relatives and did not know anyone here in the United States. He met a girl, who was maybe four or five years older than him. She already had one child by a man from Honduras. She and Alex hooked up together